THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (c) BSNL, in association with TCIL, is participating in the tenders for telecom services and installation works outside India including SAARC countries on case to case basis.

(d) No, Sir.

Uniform scam in MTNL

†471. SHRI MUNAVVAR HASAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to refer to the reply to Unstarred Question 2486 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 14th August, 2001 and state:

(a) whether C.B.I. has unearthed any Uniform scam involving crores of rupees and has also registered a case;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that arrests have been made only from amongst the Union leaders and not from the officials whereas both are equally responsible;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps being contemplated by Government to punish and terminate services of all the guilty employees/officers involved in the scam and to derecognise the Union?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) In a joint surprise check conducted by the CBI ACB, Delhi Branch and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL), Netaji Nagar, New Delhi-14, samples of cloth material for uniforms were seized. Subsequently, after analysing the related documents, a case *viz.* RC-70(A)/2001-DLI has been registered on 10.10.2001.

(b) RC-70(A)/2001-DLI has been registered against S/Shri Narendra Kumar, GM(MM), Shahbaz Ali, GM (Finance), Vineet Saxena, DGM(IR), MTNL and others on the allegations that the accused officials in conspiracy with others awarded a contract for supply of uniform cloth at exorbitant rates to M/s Mafatlal Industries Limited, who in turn supplied cheap quality cloth by purchasing it from the local market. In the process, the MTNL officials manipulated the tender process and fixed the rates of cloth being purchased a rate much higher than the market rate, thus causing undue loss to MTNL.

(c) In connection with the investigation of the case, Shri Sarup Singh, General Secretary of MTNL Staff Union and Shri Gautam Guha, Proprietor of M/s Sandhya Textiles were arrested.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) Shri Sarup Singh has played the key role in selection of uniform cloth and Shri Gautam Guha has supplied the uniform cloth on behalf of M/s Mafatlal Industries. It has also been revealed that Shri Guha had paid Rs. 36.25 lakhs till date to Shri Sarup Singh, as illegal gratification.

The other officials involved in this case have not been arrested as their exact role in the matter is still being investigated.

(e) On completion of the investigation, appropriate action will be taken.

Telephones in the villages

472. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) how many out of six lakh villages in the country have been brought under telephone communications till date, State-wise; and

(b) what steps have been taken by Government to remove the deficiencies in North-Eastern Region as regards providing telephone connections in the villages?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) As on 31.10.2001, 4,14,428 villages out of 6,07,491 villages have been provided with telephone facility. State-wise details are given in the enclosed Statement (*See* below).

(b) New technologies like Wireless in Local Loop (WLL), CDOT TDMA/ PMP and satellite for remote areas which cannot be covered with any terrestrial media have been planned for North-East Region. 61,500 lines of WLL system have been allotted for the current financial year for the North-East Region.

Statement

Status of VPTs as on 31-10-2001

Sl. No.	States	Village with VPTs
1.	Andaman and Nicobar	282
2.	Andhra Pradesh	23,401
3.	Assam	14,596
4.	Bihar	22,397
5.	Jharkhand	7,676